

# IDAHO FOREST LEGACY PROGRAM

**Idaho's Forest Legacy Program** is established to ascertain and protect environmentally important forest areas that are threatened by conversion to non-forest uses and to promote forestland protection and other conservation opportunities. The program provides funding to Idaho to purchase conservation easements on private lands that might otherwise be developed and lost as forests.

**Idaho's Forest Legacy Program** is voluntary and will include only those private landowners who wish to sell development rights to their lands. For those landowners, participation in the program allows them to capture part of the value their land has for development but, at the same time, assure that it will remain as forestland forever. The program will be an important tool for protecting the economic and environmental values associated with private forest lands and upon which so many rural Idaho communities have relied. One of the objectives of the program is to preserve forests as “working forest landscapes” where future timber production and the wildlife, recreational, and scenic values from the traditional management of those lands can be continued.

**Idaho's Forest Legacy Program** focuses exclusively on private lands, specifically private lands that can be classed as forest and woodlands by virtue of having some tree cover. This land provides multiple values, either in terms of direct economic values associated with timber or livestock production or in the wildlife, recreational, aesthetic or other values that each owner perceives. Similarly, each landowner has in mind different goals for managing their land to produce or maintain those values.

The implications for Idaho's privately owned forestlands are obvious—it is becoming increasingly valuable and sought after for purposes other than its traditional use. Unfortunately, the increase in monetary value and the inevitable development of this land threatens all that makes it attractive, including sustained wildlife, scenic and timber values. How Idaho reconciles the desire of private landowners to capture the value of their lands without destroying much of the underlying nature of that value will be a major issue as the state steps forward into this new century. **Idaho's Forest Legacy Program** can provide a useful tool for that effort.

**Idaho's Forest Legacy Program** recognizes that, in order to protect all forest values and the benefits that society derives from forested lands, it is first necessary to maintain those lands as forests. The Program acknowledges that most forested lands in the United States are held by private landowners and that those landowners face growing financial pressure to convert those lands to uses that will forever remove them from the forested land base. Most of those pressures arise from the demand for these lands for residential and commercial developments.

**Idaho's Forest Legacy Program** is not designed to arrest this trend or to impinge upon the rights of private landowners to sell or manage their lands, as they may desire. It will, however, provide a tool for willing landowners who need the revenue that development of their lands would provide, but who might also prefer that their land

continue to provide the values for which it has been traditionally managed. By allowing a one-time purchase of the “developmental rights” by the State of Idaho, landowners can derive both immediate financial benefits and be confident, along with the public, that the lands thus enrolled in the program will remain as forests in perpetuity. The Idaho Department of Lands will be responsible for assuring that the terms of the easement are met in perpetuity.

**Idaho’s Forest Legacy Program** long-range goals are:

- Reduce future conversions of forestland and forest resources,
- Maintain forest sustainability and the historic uses of forested lands,
- Assist in maintaining the culture and economies of rural communities through maintaining “working” forest landscapes,
- Protect and enhance water quality and water quantities,
- Maintain riparian areas, and,
- Protect wildlife habitat and maintain habitat connectivity within forested landscapes.

**Idaho’s Forest Legacy Program** near-term objectives are:

- ☐ Focus efforts where large areas of private forestland face near-term threats of conversion to nonforest uses and where the consequences of the associated losses to important ecological, social and economic benefit from those lands are significant.
- ☐ Encourage private landowners to work with communities, agencies, businesses and other organizations to strengthen their management of forest resources.
- ☐ Secure additional conservation investments in private forestland.

**Idaho’s Forest Legacy Program** Projects will be selected based on the following criteria:

- **Size-** Is the project of sufficient size to “matter” in terms of meeting Idaho’s goals and program objectives?
- **Connectivity-** Will the project add protected lands to other lands already protected, thus creating a larger area or is the project geographically isolated?
- **Contribution to local economies-** If the project lands are protected, will there be additional or maintained contributions to local economies?
- **Contribution to environmental and cultural values-** What is the magnitude of fish, wildlife, scenic cultural, watershed and other environmental or cultural values that will be protected if the project is approved?
- **Threats-** What is the scope and immediacy of threats to the continued existence of the project land as a forest?
- **Alternative protection methods-** Does the land qualify for range or farmland protection programs or can the same environmental values be obtained through such an alternative as a “habitat conservation plan”?
- **Support-** What is the level of public support, as indicated by availability of matching funds, partners for the project and local support for it?
- **Legacy Area Priority-** What is the priority of the Forest Legacy Area in which the project is located?

*For more information please see the Assessment of Need on-line at [http://www2.state.id.us/lands/Forest\\_Legacy/Legacy.htm](http://www2.state.id.us/lands/Forest_Legacy/Legacy.htm) or call (800) 432-4648.*